

**Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Ben Lomond High School
800 Jackson Avenue
Ogden, Utah 84404**

March 15-16, 2005



Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
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Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Ben Lomond High School
800 Jackson Avenue
Ogden, Utah 84404**

March 15-16, 2005

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 15-16, 2005, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Ben Lomond High School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the Visiting Team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Ben Smith is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Ben Lomond High School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Ben Lomond High School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
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BEN LOMOND HIGH SCHOOL
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School Administration

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Donna Corby Assistant Principal
Catherine Montgomery Assistant Principal
Jay Seese Assistant Principal

Counseling

April Brough Counselor
Charla Dean (Head) Counselor
Ann Crockett Counselor
Carol Herold Counselor

Support Staff

Secretaries

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Alice Green
Cheryle Johnson
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Anna Fay Montoya
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**Comprehensive
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Ann Neilsen
Sharon Roghaar
Penny Southwell
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Special Education

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Lori Kerivan
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Lynette Shuman

Food Service

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Manager
Mary Ann Blanch
Kayleen Carter
Wendy Empey
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Joan Thomson
Alan Turner
Jepperson Webster
Susan Wilde
Gary Wilder
Jennifer Winck

BEN LOMOND HIGH SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Ben Lomond High School is to empower all students to be lifelong learners, to pursue academic, personal and career aspirations, and to thrive as responsible citizens in a global community.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

Student learning is our priority.

Community involvement is essential. All stakeholders, including administrators, teachers, staff, students, parents and business/community partners share the responsibility to advance our mission.

Opportunities for all students exist in challenging curriculum to meet the needs of each individual.

Target excellence for the entire educational community.

Safe climate and culture maximize learning for all students.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Lynette Riggs, Sky View High School, Cache County School District
Visiting Team Chairperson

Janell Bemis, Syracuse Junior High School, Davis County School District

Chris Chournos, Bear River High School, Box Elder County School District

Sheri Heiter, Weber High School, Weber County School District

Rex McKee, Bear River High School, Box Elder County School District

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VISITING TEAM REPORT
BEN LOMOND HIGH SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Ben Lomond High School opened its doors to students in 1953. It now serves 1,418 students in grades nine through twelve. The school currently operates on a trimester schedule that is organized into three twelve-week blocks. Each Wednesday is a late-start day for students, allowing staff members to collaborate and participate in professional development and school improvement activities.

The school is located in Ogden City, Utah's only Federal Enterprise Zone, based on high poverty, crime, and racial minority population rates. Ogden's diverse environment has recently seen incredible increases in its Hispanic population (80 percent of the city's growth in 2000), giving it the largest percentage of Hispanic population in the state. One in five (19 percent) of Ogden's school-age children live in poverty. This current school year, 70 percent of Ben Lomond's students qualify for free/reduced-price lunch. In addition, the school battles high rates of student mobility and absenteeism.

Ben Lomond is in the third and final year of a comprehensive school reform plan funded by state and federal grants. School personnel have chosen the *High Schools That Work* program to guide their efforts. They are also using a small learning community model as a framework for their ninth grade center and their content "academies."

The administration and staff are working hard to improve teaching and learning at their school. Population demographics have created an "at-risk" position from which to work, but the school is upbeat and positive—and capable.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

Certainly, what is most significant is the fact that many qualified, caring teachers and administrators are coming together thoughtfully to find ways of responding to the needs of their unique clientele. At a time when Adequate Yearly Progress looms above the heads of all school personnel and students, Ben Lomond finds itself in a difficult position: Can improvements be made to produce data that will appease the federal government and the No Child Left Behind Act—on the government's terms and timelines?

Current data illuminates a need to lower the occurrences of disciplinary action, and test scores in almost all areas need to rise. Graduation rates must increase from last year's 83.33 percent.

One of the most basic places to start is with improving student attendance, and the policy and accountability changes put in place by Ben Lomond seem to be making an immediate impact.

b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

1. As for process, it is very important that a person be put in charge of the accreditation challenge. Kathleen Bideaux served in that capacity for Ben Lomond and did a very capable job. A tenuous balance is created, however, when a strong leader is put in charge: It makes it easier for everyone else to sit back and allow the appointee to do most of the work. Kathleen did a very good job trying to compensate for this tendency. She organized study groups, served as a material and emotional support and resource for the school, and helped maintain energy and focus during the process.

The Visiting Team has learned, through experience, that it is also important that a group share the act of creating the written self-study. All schools, Ben Lomond included, should strive to create their profiles more from the bottom up to enhance buy-in and understanding of the problems, questions, and solutions being considered by the school “family.”

2. This self-study will now serve as a baseline for their data-keeping efforts. Reporting longitudinal data is very important, and now a draft to build upon has been created. In the future, AYP information should be displayed, as well as UBSCT results. The charts and graphs of the data were not always in the most understandable/readable format. This would be a good place to seek out peer response and suggestions regarding clarity from other members of the faculty and community.
3. As discussed with the administration and faculty, a greater one-on-one correlation needs to exist between what is discussed in the self-study and what is specifically targeted, broken down, and put into operation in the action plan.

The Visiting Team would recommend revisiting the “Developing the Profile” NSSE rubric to strengthen the school’s self-study.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

The Visiting Team recommends that the Ben Lomond staff, faculty, and stakeholders consider the following questions to guide further inquiry and to validate their assumptions.

- Since the 9th grade center stands alone in its team-teaching, collaborative model, what data supports the conclusion that this configuration is productive?

- If data supports and validates this model, how can the same methods be applied in order to gain similar results in the schooling of 10th, 11th, and 12th graders?
- What data (generated by Ben Lomond) actively supports the realities and student performances of those participating in the “academy” model? Furthermore, what Ben Lomond-produced data supports the success of *High Schools That Work* mentorship? What is to be learned from Ben Lomond’s participation in both programs?

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

The Visiting Team has seen examples of schools that involve token faculty and community members because it is required in the process. The Visiting Team has also seen schools that are honestly making that vital change to a more community-owned teaching/learning environment. The Visiting Team believes that an honest, collaborative model is evolving within the faculty of this school. For Ben Lomond High, it is critical that the extended community become even more involved in identifying problems and creating solutions. So many of the challenges are created in the community, yet they greatly affect the school’s ability to educate its students. The Visiting Team encourages Ben Lomond’s efforts to find ways to extend its influence into the community.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

The Visiting Team learned of the school’s challenges through the school’s self-study, through conversations with different groups and individuals, and through observations. The Visiting Team believes that the people of the Ben Lomond community understand its starting points and challenges. Clearly defining the end results and how to get there is, of course, the challenge.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs) are as follows:

1. *Effective Communication*

- Students effectively use oral, written, artistic, mathematical, and technical forms of expression.
- Students recognize, develop, and communicate ideas based on a core academic curriculum.
- Students communicate with others in a respectful, clear, purposeful way.

2. *Responsible Citizenship*

- Students take responsibility for personal actions.
- Students work effectively with others.
- Students respect themselves and others.
- Students act as responsible citizens and participate in activities that promote the public good.

3. *Lifelong Learning*

- Students gain the basic knowledge and individual skills that support continuous learning.
- Students develop and use multiple learning strategies and study habits.
- Students organize resources and time effectively.
- Students evaluate their learning for the purpose of improvement.
- Students apply knowledge and information across the curriculum.

4. *Students establish and carry out personal goals.*

- Students are capable of utilizing and adapting a variety of critical and creative thinking strategies to solve complex problems.
- Students integrate new information with existing knowledge and experience.
- Students are capable of using various thinking skills in diverse situations.

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

According to the school's written profile, the following process was followed:

- Working in focus teams, teachers completed the *NSSE School Beliefs Inventory*. Results were discussed and prioritized. Using this information,

the members of the accreditation team composed several possible mission statements.

- Using a voting process, the staff chose a mission statement.
- The Community Council approved the mission statement.

Ben Lomond High School provided evidence of true collaboration in the process of building a vision for the school, in both its documentation (self-study) and the passion of the stakeholders observed by the Visiting Team. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and support staff were enthusiastic and committed to the process they had shared in arriving at a mission statement that truly spoke to their wish to be part of what is best for their community of learners.

Using an NSSE rubric, a school focus group rated the school relatively low (#2) in the area of collaboration. The reasons for that rating aren't discussed in Ben Lomond's profile, although the rationale would probably be informative. The school's final action plan certainly addresses the measurement of overall student academic achievement. The Visiting Team's questions center on breaking down the larger picture into doable chunks.

b) To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?

The school's belief statements were also identified during the same process that produced the mission statement:

- Working in focus teams, teachers completed the *NSSE School Beliefs Inventory*. Results were discussed and prioritized. Using this information, the members of the accreditation team composed several options for mission AND belief statements.
- Using a voting process, the staff chose a mission statement.
- The Community Council approved the mission statement.
- The beliefs were further honed to fit a SCOTS acronym, as illustrated on page 4 of this report.

The set of beliefs that have been defined are in direct relationship to the overriding perception by the administration and staff of Ben Lomond High School that the ultimate goal is supporting student achievement and success. Simple yet direct beliefs were handily written in an acronym that is easy to remember and assimilate into the everyday fabric of the school.

c) To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?

The mission statement clearly identifies a correlation to the defined DRSLs. It states a vision of empowerment in academic, personal and career pursuits, then

identifies what that looks like in the belief statements. Support of lifelong learning, communication, and responsibility is defined by the belief statements.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

The schedule at Ben Lomond High has been adjusted to allow for regular staff collaboration and curriculum development. The late-start schedule on Wednesday mornings facilitates increased communication among faculty members, which allows for guided sharing of materials and ideas.

Ben Lomond staff members are well on their way to developing comprehensive, thorough, and continuous curriculum plans among many its departments. There were, however, only a select few instances of cross-curricular collaboration concerning curriculum development articulated to the Visiting Team. The Social Studies and English Departments have made great strides in designing curricular units that directly support and enhance the learning environment, which also facilitates complex thinking.

Teachers are fully aware of State Core Standards, and they continually work to expand and modify classroom content to align with the Core. Most teachers also participate in regular professional development to stay current with district and state standards. The on-site School Improvement Specialist has been instrumental in obtaining funding for both content-specific and overall professional development related to school improvement.

The Freshman Center is truly a model of collaborative curriculum development. The innovative scheduling has allowed for extensive interdisciplinary teaming to enhance the educational experience for 9th grade students.

The faculty has experienced amazing professional growth in the past two years, in part because of the accreditation process itself. They are directly on the path to furthering curricular collaboration and development.

- b) *To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

During the on-site visit, the Visiting Team saw multiple examples of quality teaching, diverse strategies, and alternative assessments. Teachers are fully aware of the DRSLs and their implications.

Further analysis of the meeting schedules is needed to ensure ongoing collaborative support and curriculum development. With the vast array of tasks currently required of teachers, some of the allotted time has been used for other pursuits. Regular meeting times should be established for departments, focus groups, steering committees, accreditation facilitation, professional development, etc. This would promote ongoing progress in all critical areas.

The professional development staff has been phenomenal in planning and scheduling training to guide teachers through the various processes they are involved with. Teachers have great support among themselves, and are provided with adequate access to desired training.

In order to further the goal of improving student performance, professional development must have at its core the fundamental ideas expressed in the DRSLs. Teachers and staff members must also be trained in the proper collection and interpretation of data to support further curriculum development. Teachers should then use the data collected from standardized tests (CRTs, ACT, UBSCT, etc.) to monitor the success of the curriculum and make necessary adjustments.

The language arts teachers are doing a good job with the State Core. The school is supporting the teaching and learning of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and viewing. The Visiting Team also noted that reading and writing in the general content areas are being promoted. Behavior and citizenship issues are being targeted through a new attendance and detention policy. Both lifelong learning and complex thinking are focused on in the school's action plan.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) *To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

The Visiting Team observed a number of different teaching styles exhibited in the classroom setting. In the chemistry room, the instructor was preparing materials for a hands-on chemistry lab activity. The health science teacher used a newly prepared PowerPoint presentation in the lecture discussion activity on muscles. Students would be required to pass a test the next day of the four muscle types and their functions. In the 9th grade Earth Science classes, two classes were brought together for student presentations demonstrating the three basic types of rocks. In a clever activity, the students were encouraged to make cakes, pies, and hamburgers in order to illustrate one of the three rock types. In the Principles of Technology classes, one class was using calculators to solve "work/force" mathematical problems. Another P.O.T. (Engineering) class was building "robots" for a robot war game using pre-designed pieces. In all cases, the science and technology classes were following the Utah State Core Curriculum.

There was evidence of high quality instructional design in many classrooms, and evidence of mundane or superficial teaching in others. Generally speaking, the Visiting Team was impressed by the performance of this dedicated, thoughtful teaching staff.

A short, one-shot glimpse into the school's teaching and learning is insufficient for meaningful evaluation. It is written in the profile, however, that the staff has been engaging in in-service that provides tools for "best practices" teaching and lesson design. This involvement demonstrates that best practices are considered a priority at Ben Lomond High School.

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

The staff and the focus group examining instructional design rated the teachers highly in this area. Teachers were found to be aligning instruction with the goals and expectations for student learning, employing data-driven instructional decision-making, and expanding instructional support for student learning.

A variety of instructional strategies are being used daily in classrooms. In several instances the Visiting Team noted that, while some students were very capable of learning visually, other students were doing similar hands-on activities that allowed for students of various abilities to succeed.

There were several outstanding examples of modifications made to include diverse learners. The small learning community concept is best illustrated by the 9th grade learning center. Ninth graders are kept together for three periods a day, rotating through Earth Systems, Geography, and Language Arts. The students have the same three teachers all year long, which allows continuity of instruction. All students interviewed commented that they feel safe in this type of environment.

The Advisory class for all the high school students is another noteworthy program. Students commented to the Visiting Team that it was nice to have one teacher that they were able to relate to and confide in for the entire three to four years at the school. Some students commented that their advisory teacher provided help with class work problems; special, short lessons like resume writing or ethics lessons; or even finding scholarships.

Another noteworthy program that is showing great advances in student achievement is the weekly faculty in-service meeting that is held each Wednesday morning. Teachers are given the opportunity to discuss problems, engage in in-service activities, and listen to guest speakers. Teachers commented that these meetings were a great resource and an opportunity to learn new skills to take back to the classroom almost immediately.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

The active professional development program and contracted consulting, combined with the two grants from “High Schools That Work” and “Comprehensive School Reform,” have provided a unique opportunity for teachers to come together as a learning community that is capable of serious collaboration to meet the needs of Ben Lomond High School students.

The diverse Ben Lomond student body requires much attention from the administration and staff when it comes to accommodating differences and special needs. Below are some obvious accommodations:

- The maturity level and learning needs of the ninth graders are taken into consideration and provided for in the 9th grade center.
- Through academies, vocational interests and needs are taken into consideration and encouraged.
- Ample support is given to special education populations through the hiring of seven paraprofessionals and nine teachers.
- The counseling staff employs four counselors and five other support personnel.
- A strong ROTC program caters to the needs of a particular school population.
- An ALP program is in place. However, there is no sheltered program ease the kids into regular classes. There was no data to tell how many teachers have ESL endorsements.
- An advisory period has been put in place and is meant to build and support relationships with students.
- Evening and summer school classes are offered to help students with special needs.

Quality Assessment Systems:

The Visiting Team voiced more concerns about this focus than any other. It is interesting to see that the school assessment focus group also regarded assessment as the area that needed the most improvement.

The following questions are almost impossible to answer given Visiting Team’s short time at the school. As a whole, however, speaking from visual observation, conversation, and its reading of the school’s action plan, the Visiting Team feels the following conclusions are appropriate.

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

A variety of typical teacher-devised assessments were viewed. Taking a broader perspective, it was not clear what content standards were targeted during our visit. Is there a form of backward design in place? Are there clear, key content standards that the teachers were pursuing? Perhaps the teachers had identified and articulated such standards; however, they weren't readily apparent.

From an even broader perspective, the action plan relies primarily on standardized assessments. Somehow, periodic benchmarks of those goals need to be articulated, established, and assessed.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

The school has identified most of the information needed for various decision makers who use assessment results. Because of the high mobility and truancy of students, the information does not always reach the students who need it most. In many cases the purpose of the assessments of student learning is defined but is not consistently communicated to parents and students, especially those with the greatest need.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

The teachers do an excellent job of reaching out individually to each of the students in their classes. They are to be commended for doing much with limited resources.

Ben Lomond has a diverse population, and students have different priorities and reasons for being in school. Some come to school to get a diploma, others just to learn how to speak English. It is not fair to say all the students are being fairly tested when they have different goals and objectives, yet they are measured by the same instrument.

It is important, however, to help students and instructors know the strengths and weaknesses of their knowledge/learning and teaching. Knowing these outcomes, the staff can then employ methods that are more consistent with each and every student's needs and desired outcomes. The staff realizes that teacher-constructed assessments are the most appropriate in this situation.

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The Visiting Team was very impressed by how hard and thoughtfully the administration and school teams were working to create a safe, fertile learning environment. The timing of the accreditation visit was a problem, as the brand new administration has had immediate student and faculty issues to deal with. Hopefully, however, the process has also forced a larger view of school reform that will lay a foundation for the smaller interventions and immediate solutions.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

This school has the right idea about collaboration, and it is clear that they will continue to work toward streamlining their decision-making processes. The administration and faculty are beginning to develop a culture that looks to data for information; however, they are only at the beginning their journey to that end. The school has been fortunate enough to find an accreditation facilitator in its midst; perhaps a similar position can be found for someone to gather and respond to data at an institutional level.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

According to the administration and staff at Ben Lomond, the advisory period was put into effect to help track individual student achievement and academic progress. Interviews by the Visiting Team with students and teachers confirmed that the program is successful in varying degrees according to the buy-in of individual teachers.

The administrators and counselors are paying close attention to standardized test scores and the needs that are implied by those scores. The emphasis on these scores is attested to in the school's action plan.

Attendance data is also used as a form of assessment. The administration is working hard to improve those attendance statistics.

These broader, standardized assessments are certainly important; however, the Visiting Team also feels there is a need to create more specific types of assessments that would measure the success or failure of all the interventions that are being used. For example: How does Ben Lomond know that the ninth grade center is really beneficial? How can the school evaluate the success of faculty in-services on best practices? How can they determine whether "all the hoops they are jumping through" for grant money are effective and worth the effort?

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

Past school surveys indicated that the students didn't feel safe at school. Interviews conducted by the Visiting Team with student groups brought to light a concern about this perception. Ben Lomond students asserted that this is a myth, an erroneous perception, and that the school is safe. They believe the perception came from issues in the past and the fact that the school is nested in a "tougher" part of town.

The faculty and staff are working hard to make sure students and adults wear ID badges. They are also making progress in keeping the halls clear during class time. A recurring teacher complaint was that the time spent on behavior-related issues is excessive.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

The DRSLs "Responsible Citizenship" and "Lifelong Learning" are certainly reinforced by the school's efforts. The academy organization format is directly focused on preparing students for a vocation later in life. The strong presence of ROTC on campus is a very positive force in providing at-risk students, in particular, with goals and avenues for post-high school achievement.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

This is strength at Ben Lomond High School. Ben Lomond has a history of strong faculty leadership that continues to the present. According to discussions with the faculty, staff, and administration, the leadership has been teacher-heavy at times in the past. There is much more balance in the leadership dynamics with the current administration. Grant requirements have helped the school build and maintain varying types of focus groups and site-based decision making teams. The accreditation process was relatively easy because of the existing organizational frameworks.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

The "High Fives" (faculty thank-yous) during faculty meetings are a fun way to give a quick, yet sincere recognition. The focus groups were very supportive of each other, and felt that the accreditation experience gave them a chance to have their voices heard. Stakeholders felt that their opinions mattered or counted.

As mentioned above, Ben Lomond High is doing a fine job of collaboration for school improvement. The academy structure and the 9th grade center also create smaller learning communities that demonstrate great potential.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

The Community Council is growing. Parents are starting to participate in focus group meetings.

As with most secondary schools, the potential benefits of community participation are just beginning to be realized and appreciated. These efforts in community building take energy, time, and resources, but Ben Lomond sees the existence of a valuable, nearly untapped alumni and local business support system. The new school improvement chairperson is diligently working at finding ways the community can help support Ben Lomond High's teaching and learning efforts.

Ben Lomond feels it is important to involve the Hispanic community more in school improvement efforts. ESL family nights have been instituted to further this effort.

Ben Lomond High is working to improve computer access at the school and for the community.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

Ben Lomond High School has a comprehensive professional development program that has been developed by teachers in the school in partnership with the "High Schools That Work" grant. There are a variety of workshops that teachers may attend. The teachers self-select their topics according to need. Some workshops are held during the school day, others after school. Teachers may elect to receive in-service credit or relicensure points. All of the teachers have attended workshops. They also meet weekly on late-start Wednesday, and divide into different groups. Many school programs have come about because of these meetings, including the 90 percent attendance policy, systematic hall sweeps, student ID badges, enforcement of the dress code, and the P.M. school initiative.

The faculty attends regular teacher-designed workshops and in-services focusing on critical thinking. National workshops are made possible through a "High

Schools that Work” school improvement grant. Most of the recent faculty in-service has pertained to school accreditation efforts and issues.

- b) *To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?*

Ben Lomond High is exceptionally committed to school improvement. The school has received grants for “Comprehensive School Reform” and one from “High Schools That Work” to create small learning communities. The school goals are taken directly from these grant proposals, and it is through these grants that funding comes for professional development, school improvement, and student programs.

With these grants comes a great responsibility to perform and report success. Given the limitations of high mobility rates and low socioeconomic levels of the community, it will be a great achievement when the school attains their goals. The action plan does not specify a timeline, but it is obvious that positive reinforcements were being given to bolster morale and keep both teachers and students motivated. The dedication of funds for a school improvement director is also an important step.

The focus group recognized that there is a long way to go to achieve the school’s goals, but the administration, staff, and faculty are committed to the process.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I – Educational Program

This standard is met. Ben Lomond High School’s instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

Standard II – Student Personnel Services

This standard is met and exceeded. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. The assigned personnel for guidance exceeds a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled.

Standard III – School Plant and Equipment

This standard is adequately met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

Standard IV – Library Media Program

This standard is met. The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support. A certified library media teacher provides instruction, resources, and activities to promote independent use of ideas and information.

Standard V – Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI – School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school.

Standard VII – Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the subjects they are assigned.

Standard VIII – Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Ben Lomond High School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

Standard IX – Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

Standard X – Activities

This standard is met. Ben Lomond High supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional interests and opportunities for learning to take place.

Standard XI – Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

Overall, the goals of the action plan, though broad, are sound—and necessary—for Ben Lomond to continue to improve and to meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The goals identified are:

- Decrease the number of students not meeting mastery level in Reading Comprehension strategies by 10 percent on the Utah Criterion Referenced Tests (CRTs).
- Decrease by 10 percent the number of students not meeting mastery level in Composing (writing) strategies on the Utah CRTs.
- Decrease the number of students not meeting mastery on the Elementary Algebra end-of-level assessment by 10 percent.
- By 2006, all 10th, 11th, and 12th grade students will identify and enroll in a learning community.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The Visiting Team has no doubt that the administration, faculty, and staff of Ben Lomond High School are dedicated and will continue to work very hard to try to solve the school's problems. In some areas, such as attendance and behavior, preliminary stumbling blocks must be eased in order to ultimately raise test scores. The administration, faculty, and staff realize this and are actively seeking solutions.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

The action plan has broken down the goals into smaller activities and strategies, but the measures listed are general. Certainly those measures, such as CRT scores, indicate a general success.

The Visiting Team recommends that assessments, formal or informal, be developed and implemented to measure the productivity of specific interventions that are currently used by the school. With so many programs and activities being implemented, the teachers, staff, and administration need data to verify which interventions are worthwhile. Those strategies that are not validated should be “scraped from the plate of a very tired school family.” Then more time and energy can be channeled toward programs and strategies that genuinely produce results.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team was impressed by and commends the attitudes and energy of the administration, faculty, and staff of Ben Lomond High School. They face difficult demographic challenges, yet they remain incredibly dedicated to school improvement and the safety and success of their students.
- The staff is instituting many interventions to help students be successful. In addition, they have a great responsibility to manage the requirements of several grants. The Visiting Team commends the school community’s tireless dedication to Ben Lomond High School.
- The Visiting Team commends Ben Lomond High for its positive school climate and great students. According to many, Ben Lomond High School has a reputation for being tough and perhaps even unsafe. The Visiting Team did not receive this impression at all. Teachers ventured out of their classrooms and into the halls to interact with students in a positive manner, few students were in the halls during class, and students responded to the administrators and teachers with respect and were delightful in their interactions with the Visiting Team.
- The Visiting Team commends the inviting atmosphere created by Ben Lomond’s clean school facilities. The school was maintained in a manner that reflects pride in the school and its students.

- The Visiting Team commends the identifiable, clear efforts being made toward raising expectations and academic rigor for all students. The administration, faculty, and staff are striving to meet high standards, and there is an expectation that all members of the school community will fully participate in school improvement. The teaching staff is working at teaching higher levels of thinking in their classrooms and using literacy as a tool in all content areas.

Recommendations:

- Ben Lomond High is at the front end of incredible school improvement efforts. The Visiting Team recognizes the need for the school to find ways of maintaining this positive energy as they press forward. The Visiting Team recommends a close examination of existing programs and a concentration on those programs that produce positive, measurable outcomes. Programs yielding minimal results should be eliminated. Sometimes less is more.

School interventions are always started with good intentions; and, as is often the case, success is measured by the fact that a program either feels good or makes logical sense. A beginning point is for the school to take a close look at existing grants vs. impact/results and interventions vs. impact/results. With examination data the school will be in a position to seek more or new interventions or answers.

- The Visiting Team recommends that clear, intermediate goals and assessments be established that will assist Ben Lomond High School on its road to achieving their broadest goals. Ben Lomond has carefully articulated in its action plan the end results it desires. They know what must be achieved so that students will meet all federal and state guidelines that support high school graduation.

The significant point is that the school's improvement approach is quite multifaceted and broad in nature. Resources, efforts, and energy need to be targeted toward those proven activities, programs, and interventions that are proven to be successful.